

**LISTING OF CLAIMS:**

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listing, of claims in the application.

1. (Currently Amended) An ink cartridge detachably mountable on an ink-jet printing apparatus, comprising:

an ink accommodating portion for holding ink;

an air passage through which said ink accommodating portion communicates with the atmosphere; ~~and~~

a valve mechanism, provided in said air passage, including an air-releasing valve member that can seal from a certain sealing direction a communication hole provided in a partition wall that separates an ink-accommodating-portion side of the ink cartridge, that is a side close to said ink accommodating portion, from an atmosphere side of the ink cartridge, that is a side close to said ~~the~~ atmosphere, ~~the valve mechanism extending in a direction~~ the sealing direction being from said ink-accommodating-portion side toward said atmosphere side; and  
a pressing member that presses said air-releasing valve member in a direction from said accommodating portion side toward the atmosphere side,

wherein said air-releasing valve member comprises a pressed portion pressed by said pressing member at said ink-accommodating portion side of the ink cartridge, and said air-releasing valve member further comprises ~~has~~ a contact portion that opens said air passage in response to an applied external force, transmitted through a part of the printing apparatus when the ink cartridge is mounted on the printing apparatus, from said atmosphere side toward said ink-accommodating-portion side.

2. (Previously Presented) An ink cartridge as in claim 1, wherein said air passage includes a winding passage and a breathable filter that repels liquid arranged in that order from said atmosphere, and

said valve mechanism is located between said filter and said ink accommodating portion.

3. (Cancelled)

4. (Previously Presented) An ink cartridge as in claim 1, further comprising a hammer movable about an axis and which comes into contact with said contact portion of said air-releasing valve member to open said air passage.

5. (Previously Presented) An ink cartridge as in claim 4, wherein said hammer moves around said axis in a direction perpendicular to a mounting direction of said ink cartridge onto the printing apparatus.

6. (Previously Presented) An ink cartridge as in claim 1, further comprising an air-releasing valve pressing member that moves substantially in parallel to a mounting direction of said ink cartridge onto the printing apparatus, and

said contact portion is pressed by said air-releasing valve pressing member to open said air passage.

7. (Previously Presented) An ink cartridge as in claim 6, wherein said air-releasing valve member has a projecting portion extending along said mounting direction of said

ink cartridge onto the printing apparatus to project from said communication hole toward said atmosphere side, said projecting portion being configured so as to be pressed by said air-releasing valve pressing member.

8. (Previously Presented) An ink cartridge as in claim 6, further comprising a pressing member that presses said air-releasing valve member with an elastic force in a direction of said mounting direction of said ink cartridge onto the printing apparatus.

9. (Previously Presented) An ink cartridge as in claim 4, further comprising:  
a film located between the contact portion and the hammer,  
wherein said contact portion is pressed by said hammer via the film located therebetween.

10. (Previously Presented) An ink cartridge as in claim 6, wherein a face of a section accommodating said air-releasing valve pressing member, that is pressed against the printing apparatus, is sealed with a film.

11. (Previously Presented) A vacuum-packaging product comprising:  
an ink cartridge as claimed in any one of the preceding claims; and  
a bag-like outer packaging member covering said ink cartridge, wherein  
a pressure inside said outer packaging member is reduced to seal said ink cartridge.

12. (New) An ink cartridge as in claim 1, further comprising:

a space that is formed at said ink accommodating portion side, said space accommodating therein a part of said valve mechanism member; and  
an ink passage that connects said space with said ink accommodating portion.

13. (New) An ink cartridge as in claim 1, further comprising:

an ink supply port,

wherein said air passage includes a portion where the air communication with the atmosphere is operated, and said portion is located on a same side as said ink supply port.

14. (New) An ink cartridge as in claim 1, wherein said pressing member is formed from resin.

15. (New) An ink cartridge as in claim 13, wherein said part of said valve mechanism is said pressing member.

16. (New) An ink cartridge as in claim 1, wherein said pressing member contacts the air-releasing valve member at a first position, said contact portion of said air-releasing valve member is located at a second position, and the first position is closer to the ink-accommodating portion than the second position.

17. (New) An ink cartridge as in claim 1, wherein said pressing member is located behind said air-releasing valve member with respect to the sealing direction from said ink-accommodating portion said toward said atmosphere side.

18. (New) An ink cartridge as in claim 1, wherein an area of said pressed portion of said air-releasing valve member is larger than an area of said contact portion thereof.

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